CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for exchanging messages between users, comprising:
processing messages from a plurality of user networks having a plurality of network protocols, for storage in a message store; and
accessing at least one of the messages in the message store from one of the user networks having any one of the network protocols.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the messages comprise one or more of the following message formats: voicemail, email, facsimile, SMS, video and a graphical image.

3. The method of claim 2, the step of processing comprising transforming at least one of the messages from one message format to another message format.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising sending a notification of the at least one message to a user connected with the one user network.

5. The method of claim 4, the step of sending comprising embedding information about the at least one message in the notification, wherein a user accessing the notification directly accesses the one message in responding to the notification.

6. The method of claim 1, the step of processing comprising the steps of:
associating one or more of the messages with a subscriber;
determining whether the subscriber has an existing mailbox;
if the subscriber has the existing mailbox, storing the one or more messages in the existing mailbox; and
if the subscriber does not have the existing mailbox, creating a new mailbox and storing the one or more messages in the new mailbox.

7. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
obtaining configuration information about the mailbox;

purging all expired messages of the mailbox;

archiving messages of the mailbox that (a) substantially exceed a predetermined memory allocation for the mailbox and (b) have not been accessed by the subscriber for a predetermined time period;

compressing non-purged and non-archived messages of the mailbox.

8. A communications system for exchanging messages between users, comprising:

a first messaging store for storing the messages;

a first messaging server for accessing messages of the first message store; and

at least one first server for interfacing between the messaging server and user networks such that the messages are exchanged between the users, via the first messaging server and the first messaging store, even if the user networks employ a plurality of protocols.

9. The communications system of claim 8, the user networks comprising one or more of PSTN, wireless, VOIP and Internet.

10. The communications system of claim 8, the first server comprising a fax server for interfacing with the PSTN network, and wherein at least one of the messages comprises a fax.

11. The communications system of claim 8, the first server comprising an IVR for interfacing with at least one of PSTN, VOIP and wireless networks, and wherein at least one of the messages comprises a voice message.

12. The communications system of claim 8, the first server comprising a web server for interfacing with the Internet, and wherein at least one of the messages comprises an Internet message.

13. The communications system of claim 12, the Internet message comprising one or more of email and email attachments.

14. The communications system of claim 12, the web server having a graphical user interface through which subscriber users manage and access messages of the first message store.

15. The communications system of claim 8, the protocols comprising one of E1/C7, T1/SS7 and TCP/IP.

16. The communications system of claim 8, the messages comprising one or more of email, voicemail, fax, SMS, graphic, text, and video.

17. The communications system of claim 8, the messages being encapsulated in XML documents within the first message store.

18. The communications system of claim 8, the first server comprising a first notification server for notifying subscriber users of at least one of the messages.

19. The communications system of claim 8, the first server comprising a first notification server for notifying subscriber users of a newly activated service.

20. The communications system of claim 8, the first server comprising a first notification server for prompting subscriber users for action.

21. The communications system of claim 8, further comprising one or more first TTS/ASR servers for performing at least one of the following functions: converting text-to-speech and recognizing speech.

22. The communications system of claim 8, further comprising a first directory/authentication server for authenticating access to the messages in cooperation with the first messaging server.

23. The communications system of claim 8, further comprising a first billing/reporting server for creating and storing CDRs.

24. The communications system of claim 8, the first message store indexing the messages.

25. The communications system of claim 8, further comprising a first directory/user profile store for storing user-related information.

26. The communications system of claim 8, further comprising a first synchronization server synchronizing messages at different nodes of the user networks.

27. The communications system of claim 8, further comprising

a second messaging store for storing replicas of one or more of the messages;

a second messaging server for accessing replica messages of the first message store; and

at least one second server for interfacing between the second messaging server and the user networks such that the replica messages are exchanged between the users, and via the second messaging server and the second messaging store, even if the user networks employ a plurality of protocols; the second messaging store, second messaging server and second server being located at a roaming node that is different from a home node of the first messaging store, the first messaging server and first server, wherein a roaming subscriber communicating with the roaming node has access to messages sent to the first server and intended for the roaming subscriber.

28. The communications system of claim 27, the replica messages being deleted when the roaming subscriber returns to the home node.

29. The communications system of claim 27, further comprising a first synchronization server at the home node and a second synchronization server at the roaming node, the first and second synchronization servers being synchronized over a network such that messages and user profile information is replicated for the roaming subscriber at the roaming node.

30. A method for processing dynamic mailboxes, comprising:

associating a message with a subscriber;

determining whether the subscriber has an existing mailbox;

if the subscriber has the existing mailbox, storing a voicemail message from the telephone call in the existing mailbox; and

if the subscriber does not have the existing mailbox, creating a new mailbox and storing the voicemail message in the new mailbox.

31. The method of claim 30, the step of associating comprising determining information from the telephone call.

32. The method of claim 31, the step of determining information comprising determining a number called that corresponds to the subscriber.

33. The method of claim 31, the step of determining information comprising determining a caller ID.

34. The method of claim 30, the step of creating a new mailbox comprising populating the new mailbox with default profile information.

35. The method of claim 30, further comprising determining whether the subscriber is roaming and replicating the new mailbox at a remote location.

36. The method of claim 35, the step of replicating comprising synchronizing servers between a home location of the new mailbox and the remote location.

37. The method of claim 35, the step of replicating comprising copying the new mailbox to the remote location.

38. A method for automatically managing dynamic mailboxes, comprising:

obtaining configuration information from one or more dynamic mailboxes;

purging all expired messages of the dynamic mailboxes;

archiving messages of the dynamic mailboxes that (a) substantially exceed a predetermined memory allocation and (b) have not been accessed by a subscriber for a predetermined time period;

compressing non-purged and non-archived messages of the dynamic mailboxes.

messages can be any type

39. A process for selectively retrieving messages, comprising:

embedding information about a stored message within a notification for the stored message;

communicating the notification to a subscriber over a network; and

responding to interaction between the subscriber and the embedded information to communicate the stored message to the subscriber.

40. The method of claim 39, the step of responding comprising associating a telephone call from a subscriber with the stored message, and wherein the step of communicating the stored message to the subscriber comprises playing the stored message to the subscriber.

41. The process of claim 39, the step of communicating the notification comprising utilizing SMS.

42. The process of claim 41, wherein the interaction comprises replying to the SMS notification.